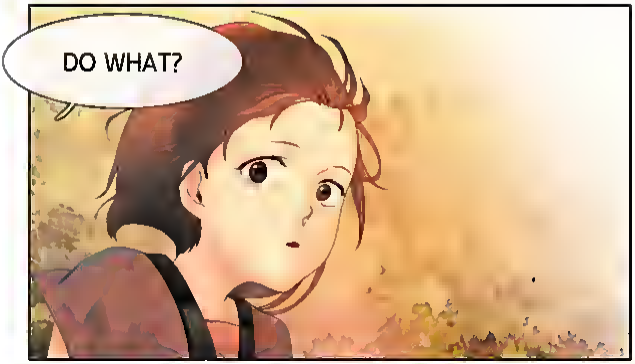
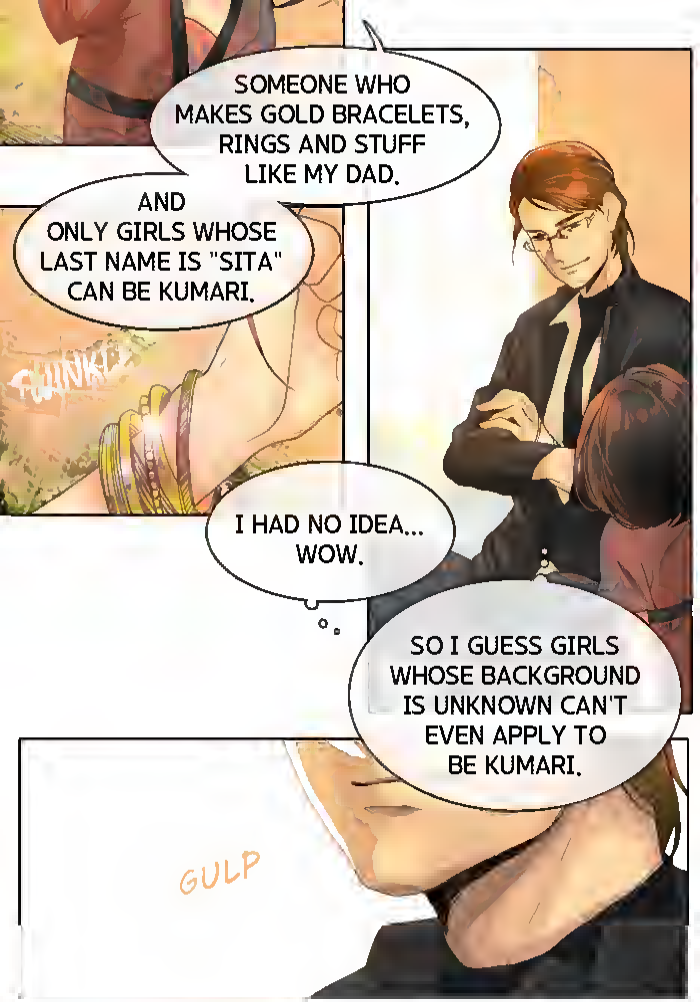
WHENEVER I'M WITH YOU,
I FEEL LIKE I CAN DO IT.

IN A HOUSEHOLD THAT MAY BE DIVINE,

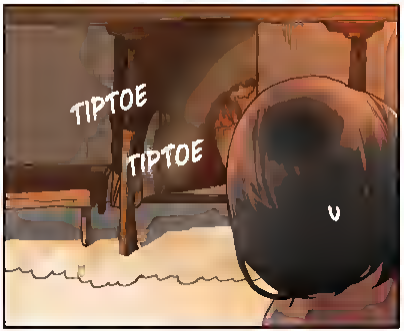
SHE'S ALREADY BEEN BORN WITH THE FIRST REQUIREMENT.


DO WHAT?

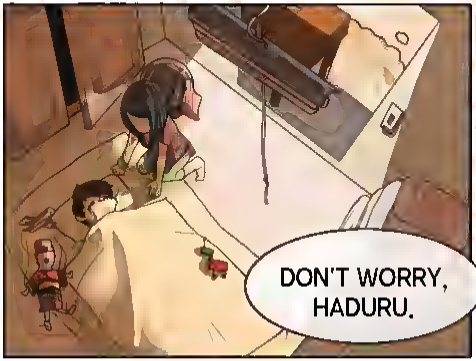
BECOME A KUMARI.
ACTUALLY,
WHEN YOU CALL ME,
YOU SHOULD SAY "JHARANA",
NOT "SITA."
JHARANA'S MY NAME.
SITA'S JUST
MY LAST NAME.
FLOP
DO YOU KNOW
WHAT "SITA" MEANS,
MISTER?
IT HAS
THE SAME MEANING
AS SIDDHARTHA.
AND,
IT ALSO
MEANS

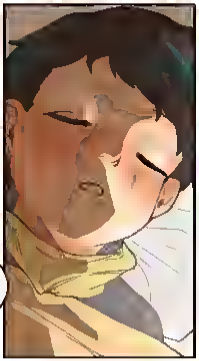

SOMEONE WHO MAKES GOLD BRACELETS, RINGS AND STUFF LIKE MY DAD.
AND ONLY GIRLS WHOSE LAST NAME IS "SITA" CAN BE KUMARI.
CLINK
I HAD NO IDEA... WOW.
SO I GUESS GIRLS WHOSE BACKGROUND IS UNKNOWN CAN'T EVEN APPLY TO BE KUMARI.
GULP

ART / STORY BY HAGA


TIPTOE
TIPTOE

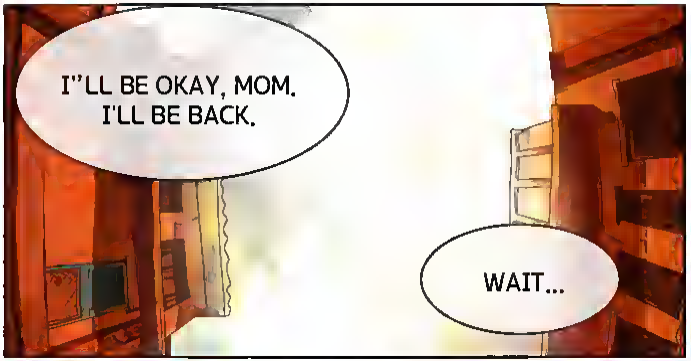
STEP


DON'T WORRY, HADURU.



..I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT.

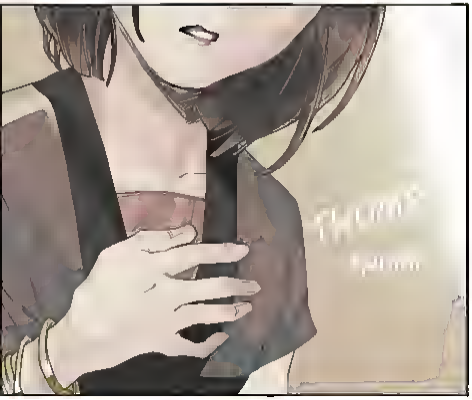
BREEZE
BREEZE



*IN INDIA, NEPAL AND SURROUNDING REGIONS, THE TIKA IS A RED DOT ON THE FOREHEAD SYMBOLIZING A 3RD EYE, OR AN EYE OF WISDOM.

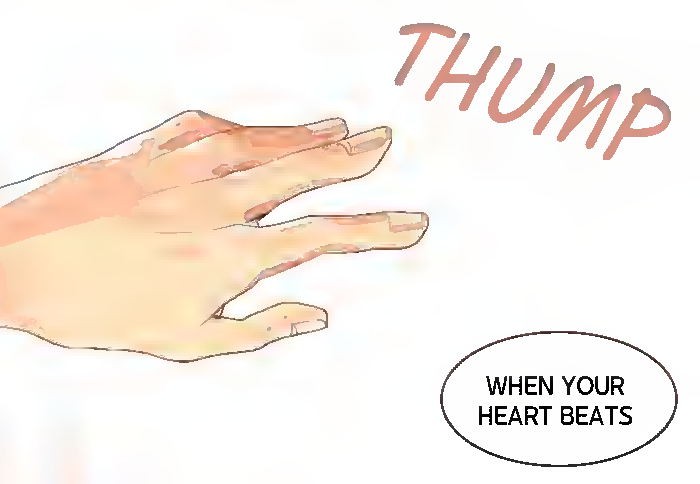
SITA, YOU MUST DO REALLY WELL. WITHOUT YOU TWO I...
DON'T WORRY, MOM. I CAN DO IT!

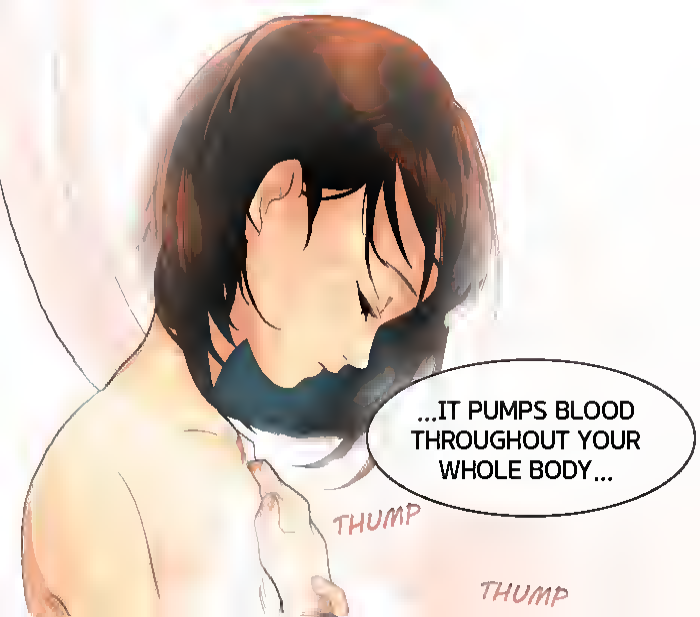
SITA,
CAN YOU PUT YOUR
HAND ON YOUR
HEART?

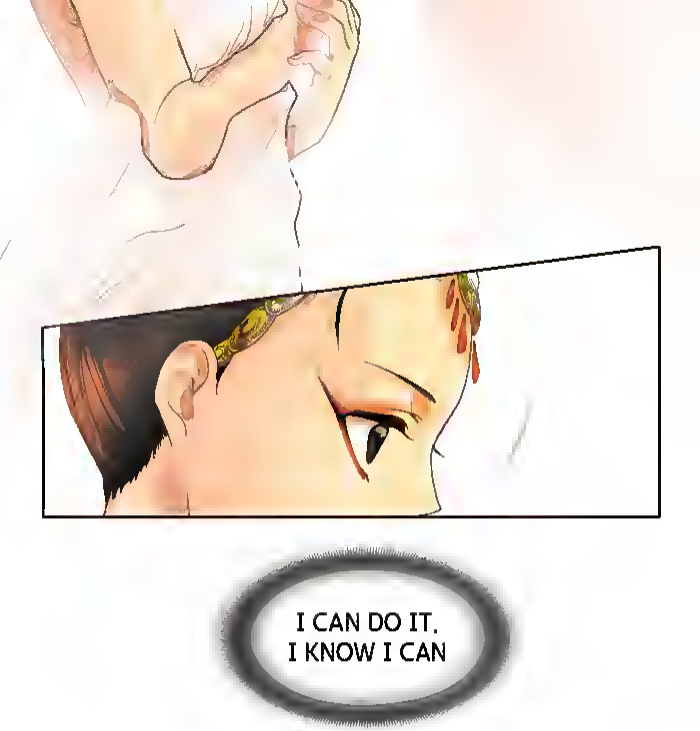

THUMP

WELL?
I CAN FEEL IT BEATING.
THAT'S RIGHT. THAT MEANS YOU'RE ALIVE.

YOU KNOW, SITA
THUMP


THUMP
WHEN YOUR HEART BEATS


...IT PUMPS BLOOD THROUGHOUT YOUR WHOLE BODY...
THUMP
THUMP


I CAN DO IT.
I KNOW I CAN

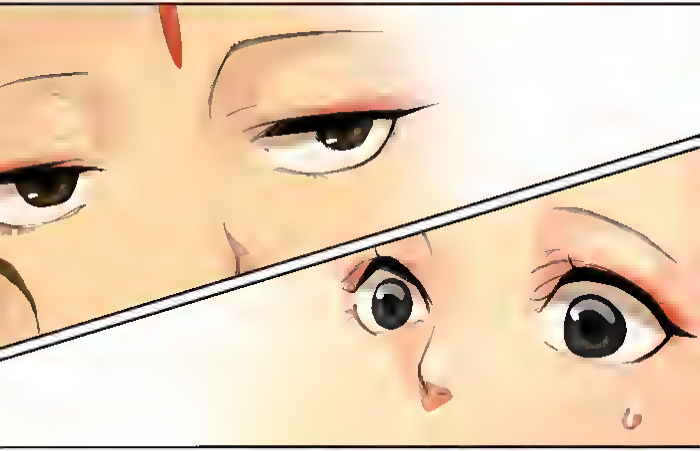
CREEAAK
WE'LL NOW BEGIN
THE SELECTION PROCESS
FOR THE NEXT KUMARI.

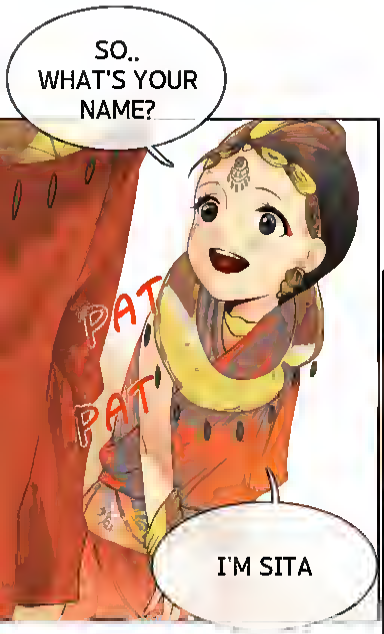
DUM
COME IN, EVERYONE
DUM
YOU WHO SHALL REPRESENT THE GODDESS TALEJU.

I AM
IN CHARGE OF
THE SELECTION
PROCESS
AND HAVE
AWAITED
THIS DAY
SINCE YOU LOST
YOUR FIRST
BABY TOOTH.
SSS—
HERE IS A
*ROKTA WITH
THE 32 CONDITIONS
INSCRIBED UPON IT.
*ROKTA = PAPER

IF YOU DO NOT SATISFY EVEN ONE OF THESE CONDITIONS, YOU WILL BE SENT HOME IMMEDIATELY.
WHOEVER IS LEFT AT THE END OF THE PROCESS WILL BE A KUMARI.
WHOOSH
WELL
COME UP ONTO THE STAGE!
WHOOSH

URGH!
WHACK!
GET OUTTA MY WAY!
!
GRAB
GEEZ! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
MOVE
MOVE
MOVE
OUCH
NO RUNNING!
CRASH
HAH-
SERVES HER RIGHT!




SO..
WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?
PAT
PAT
I'M SITA

WHY,
WHAT'S
WRONG?

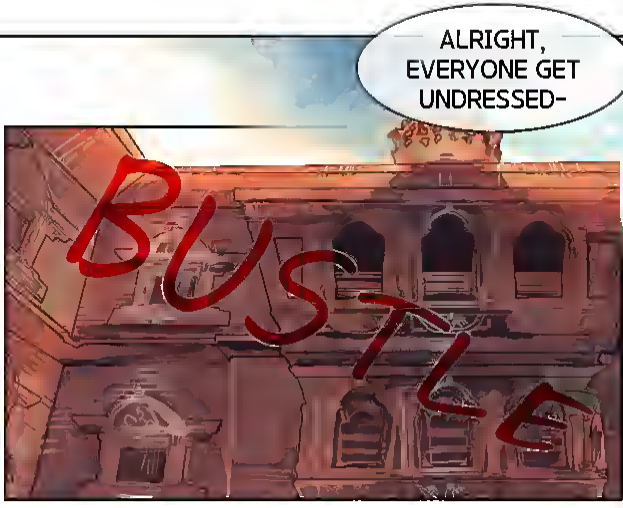
ARE YOU STUPID? WE ALL HAVE THE SAME LAST NAME.
OH RIGHT!
I'M SITA JHARANA.
JHARANA? WHAT A WEIRD NAME.
REALLY?!
I'M SITA RAMLO.

RAMLO MEANS "WHITE FACE" IN NEPAL
THANKS FOR CATCHING ME RAM-
I WASN'T HELPING YOU.
TURN
THE SELECTION PROCESS WILL BEGIN NOW.
STARTING TODAY. NO OTHER PEOPLE WILL BE ALLOWED INTO THIS BUILDING.

THE KUMARI SELECTION WILL TAKE 3 DAYS.

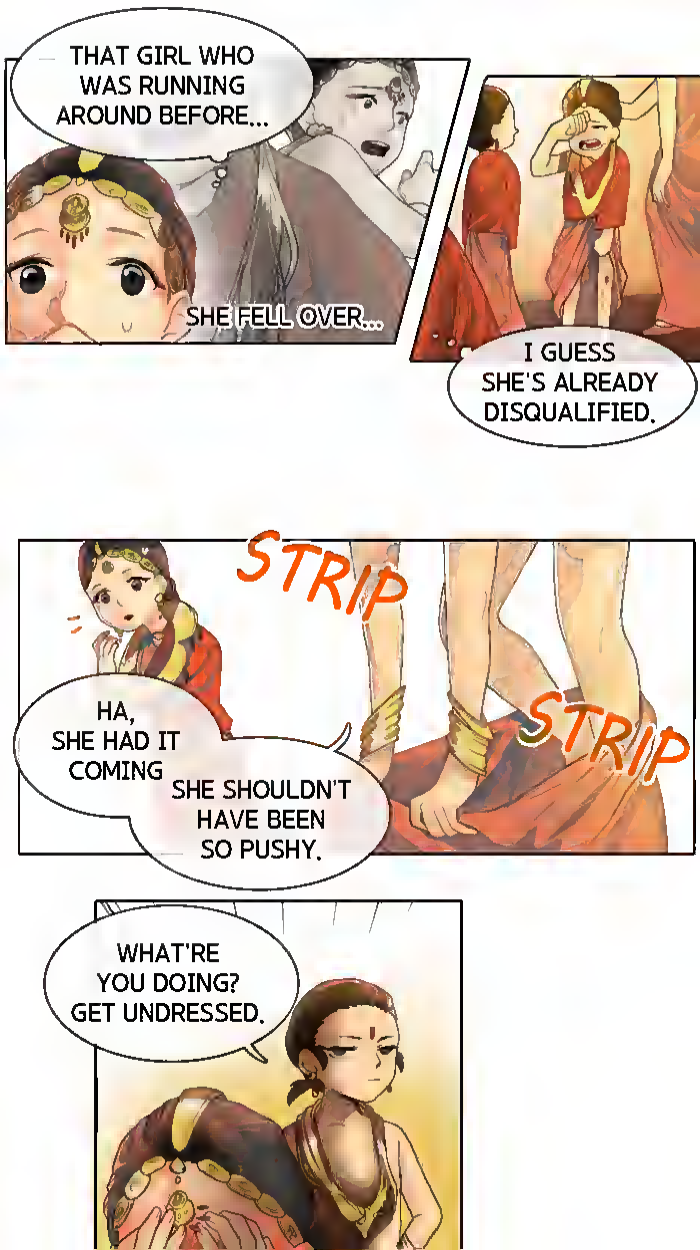
ON THE FIRST DAY, THE FIRST CONDITION WE WILL CHECK IS-

[THERE MUST NOT BE ANY SCARS, WOUNDS OR MOLES ON THE BODY FROM BIRTH.]


ALRIGHT, EVERYONE GET UNDRESSED-
BUSTLE

AAAHH
IT'S STUPID TO HELP OTHERS HERE BUT SHE WAS EVEN MORE STUPID-
THE GODDESS TALEJU HAS PUNISHED HER.
RAMLO YOU HELPED ME, THOUGH...
SHE'S STILL A BABY.

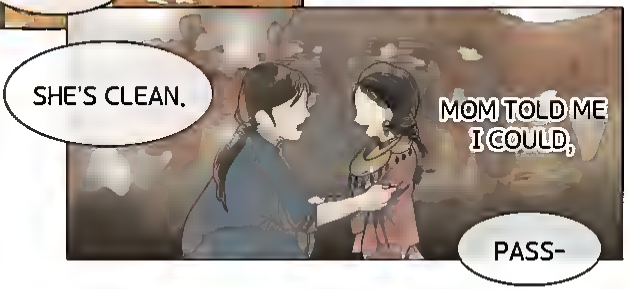
SO LITTLE...
CAN'T EVEN TAKE OFF HER OWN CLOTHES.
SHE'S JUST AROUND THE SAME AGE AS HADURU..
SAY "HOORAY!"
?
WHAT'S SHE DOING?
DOESN'T

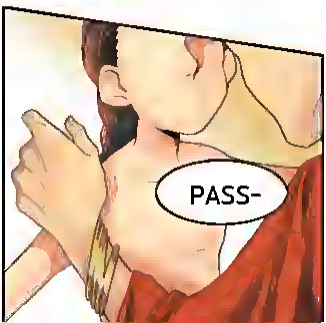

THAT GIRL WHO WAS RUNNING AROUND BEFORE...
SHE FELL OVER...
I GUESS SHE'S ALREADY DISQUALIFIED.
STRIP
STRIP
HA, SHE HAD IT COMING
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO PUSHY.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING? GET UNDRESSED.

SHE KNOW THAT ONLY ONE OF US CAN BE A KUMARI?
WHATEVER. LET HER MESS UP HER OWN LIFE.
I'M NOT HELPING HER AGAIN.
I HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN.
I'VE GOT TO BECOME A KUMARI

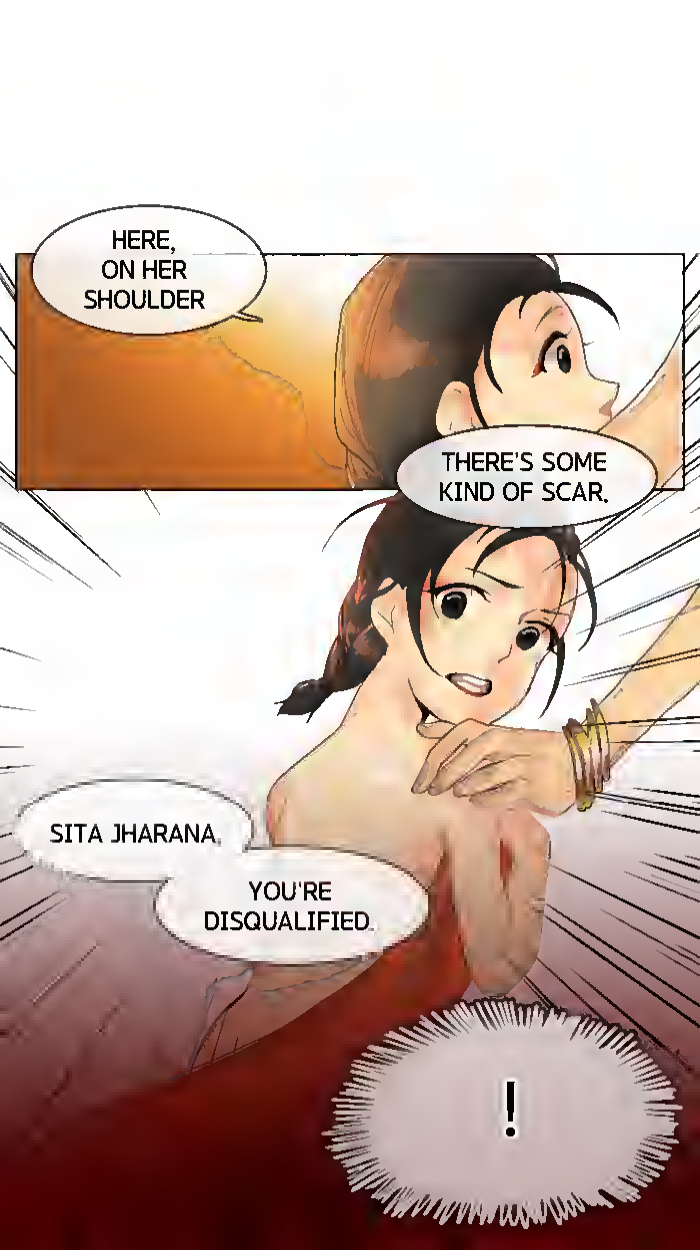
TO HELP MY SICK BROTHER AND MY PARENTS.

PASS-
I CAN DO IT!
NO DEFECTS


SHE'S CLEAN.
MOM TOLD ME I COULD,
PASS-


PASS-

NO DEFECTS-
SHE'S CLEAN..
SO DID THAT MAN
WAIT.


HERE, ON HER SHOULDER
THERE'S SOME KIND OF SCAR.
SITA JHARANA.
YOU'RE DISQUALIFIED.
!